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Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

OCA 86-2906
28 AUG 1986

Mr. Bernard McMahon, Staff Director
Select Committee on Intelligence
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Bernie:

The enclosed letter from Larry Gershwin responds to your letter of 30 July requesting information on the confidence levels shown in certain weapons production figures in the IIM, Soviet Military Production 1974-85. The NIO decided after a review of the data that a written response would serve your interests better than a briefing as we originally discussed with you. Please let us know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

[Redacted Signature]

Acting Director of Congressional Affairs

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Enclosure
as stated

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OCA: [Redacted] (27 August 1986)

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

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National Intelligence Council

26 August 1986

Bernard F. McMahon
Staff Director
Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Mr. McMahon:

In response to your enquiry, dated 30 July 1986, we are pleased that the study, Soviet Military Production, 1974-1985, was so well received. Our elaboration of the confidence levels specified in that study should be read with several understandings in mind. First, this is to be an annual exercise, and our confidence levels--along with the estimates themselves--can be expected to change in the future as we develop new information, subject our confidence level judgments to further scrutiny, and collectively become more adept in undertaking this type of exercise. Second, there should be no confusion between the confidence levels cited in the IIM in question and the monitoring confidences that US Intelligence routinely provides to the arms control policy world--in short, the two can be very different. The confidence levels we use in the IIM are the analysts' subjective judgment of how confident they think they are in their production estimates. Arms control-related monitoring confidences, in contrast, assess how likely we think we are that we can detect a violation.

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Strategic Missiles

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Other factors are also involved and these are best discussed in the context of each of the systems about which you raised questions. With respect to the:

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I hope the foregoing satisfactorily answers the questions you have posed. Let me emphasize that our effort at assigning confidence levels on a year-by-year basis for about 250 strategic and tactical systems represents a first for us. We are very proud of the product but do expect it to improve. The improvements we anticipate will occur not only from the fact that our analysts will have become more experienced in doing this sort of exercise, but also because we expect to make better use of the data available to us. And because we intend improving our tasking of existing collection systems to answer more directly those questions that bear on the confidence with which we make our production estimates. [redacted]

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If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact our Office of Congressional Affairs who will in turn relay those questions to us. [redacted]

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Sincerely,



Lawrence K. Gershwin
National Intelligence Officer
for Strategic Programs

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